

**MONTANA GREATER SAGE-GROUSE STEWARDSHIP FUND ACCOUNT
("MSGGSFA")
GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

December 15, 2015

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Act ("Act") is to provide competitive grant funding and establish ongoing free-market mechanisms for voluntary, incentive-based conservation measures that emphasize maintaining, enhancing, restoring, expanding, and benefiting sage grouse habitat and populations on private lands, and public lands as needed, that lie within core areas, general habitat, or connectivity areas. MCA § 76-22-102(2).

The Act also requires that the majority of the grant funds be awarded to projects that generate credits that are available for compensatory mitigation. Therefore, MSGOT will prioritize grant awards to projects which maximize the number of credits generated per dollars of funds awarded, and which provide assurances that credits generated by the project are available for compensatory mitigation. The habitat quantification tool will be used to determine the number of credits generated for any projects funded under the Grant Program.

Applications to the Grant Program do **not** constitute a consultation with MSGOT or the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program concerning a new activity or land use governed by the stipulations of *Executive Order 12-2015*, dated September 8, 2015. It is not the purpose of this Grant Program to exclude or waive necessary review of any new land uses or activities subject to *Executive Order 12-2015*. Any proposed land use or activity described in the grant application which triggers review under *Executive Order 12-2015* must also be reviewed by the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program pursuant to that process.

Applicants are required to read the key documents before applying for Grant funding:

- The *Evaluation and Eligibility Criteria Guidance Document* for Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Account Grant Program. This document combines the statutory requirements of the grant program located at MCA § 76-22-101 *et seq*, and the administrative rules promulgated to implement the grant program located at **XX.XX.101-102, ARM.**
- *Executive Order 12-2015*, dated September 8, 2015, which outlines the duties of the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team and the Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.

Applicants are encouraged to read the following documents before applying for Grant funding:

- *The Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Advisory Council Final Recommendations*, dated January 29, 2014 available at **XXXX.**

- The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Notice of 12 Month Petition Finding*, announcing its decision not to list the greater sage grouse rangewide under the federal Endangered Species Act (i.e. the “not warranted for listing” decision); see 80 FR 59858-59942, October 2, 2015, [available at XXX](#). Attention should be placed on portions relevant to Montana.

GRANT APPLICATION GENERAL INFORMATION (please read before completing or submitting an application):

All projects should be submitted on the Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Account Grant Program Application Form.

Applications can be submitted at any time but Applications will only be processed once the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team announces a grant application deadline. It is anticipated that there will be two deadlines, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Grant funding is provided for the purpose of implementing projects that satisfy the eligibility and evaluation requirements of the Act, and which further address the primary threats to sage-grouse as identified in *Executive Order 12-2015* and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in its *12 Month Petition Finding* of “not warranted for listing” published as 80 FR 59858-59942, October 2, 2015. Applicants are required to read the *Evaluation and Eligibility Criteria Guidance Document* and *Executive Order 12-2015*, and tailor projects accordingly. Applicants may also find it helpful to review *The Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Advisory Council Final Recommendations*, dated January 29, 2014 and the *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 12 Month Petition Finding* concluding listing of the greater sage grouse is not warranted throughout its range.

Organizations and agencies are eligible for grant funding, whereas private individuals are not. In addition, organizations and agencies must hold and maintain conservation easements or leases or be directly involved in sage grouse habitat mitigation and enhancement activities.

Grant Recipients are required to enter into a grant agreement with MSGOT and the Program. An applicant is not a grant recipient until the grant agreement has been executed by all necessary parties. Grant agreements will include necessary terms and conditions to insure that grant funds are disbursed and utilized consistent with the purpose and language of the Act.

Grants funds are distributed as reimbursements in most cases. This means the grantee must submit for reimbursement of expenses incurred while carrying out the project. “Up front” funding is typically not allowed, unless specifically identified in any grant agreement.

Grant funding cannot be used for replacement or supplementation of a grantees operating budget, unless the budget items directly relate to the conservation of Sage

Grouse. For example, grant funding cannot be used to obtain office space, increase a wage or salary, or for acquisition of capital goods, assets, or durable goods (trucks, GPS units, computers, software, etc.).

Semi-annual progress reports, a final report, and a fiscal close-out report are required for each grant project to allow tracking of expenditures and to document results. In addition, ongoing monitoring plans will be required.

Documents referenced in this form are available at: <http://XXXX>

Completed applications should be submitted through the [XXXX](#) at <http://XXXX>. Please be aware that this program requires all information to be submitted digitally through that web portal. Applicants should obtain access to that website as early as possible and reserve adequate time to input all application information into that system.

Questions may be directed to Carolyn Sime, Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program, 1625 Eleventh Ave, Helena, MT 59620; (406) 444-0554; csime2@mt.gov.

**MONTANA GREATER SAGE-GROUSE STEWARDSHIP FUND ACCOUNT
("MGSFSFA")
GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

Project Title: This should be brief (less than 10 words) but descriptive.

Grant Request Amount (in \$):

Applicant(s) Information:

Name:

Title:

Agency/Organization:

Street/P.O. Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone #: FAX #:

E-mail:

Point of Contact: (name only one individual):

Name:

Title:

Agency/Organization:

Street/P.O. Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone #: FAX #:

E-mail:

Proposal Prepared by: Leave blank if same as Point of Contact.

Name:

Title:

Agency/Organization:

Street/P.O. Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone #: FAX #:

E-mail:

Request: One-time Payment or Reimbursable

**Is this a multi-year project for which future grants will be sought from MGSFSFA?
If so, explain.**

All Project Partners/Cooperators. Provide contact information for all persons, organizations, and agencies:

(A) involved in the proposed project

(B) who own lands in the project location, or

(C) who own lands for which the grant applicant is claiming project benefits.

For each identified person, organization, or agency, describe their role in the proposed project.

Identify any MOUs, agreements, or contracts associated with the project.

Project Narrative: Describe the problems or threats specifically identified at the project location, what actions the project will undertake, and how such actions will address the threats and satisfy the stated goals and objectives of the project. (3 pages of narrative or less)

Management Relevance/Conservation Benefit: Describe the benefits to be achieved if the project is implemented. (200 word narrative or less)

Problem / Threat Analysis: Describe the sage grouse problems/threats being addressed by the project and why the project is necessary. (Approximately 100 words)

Project Location:

UTM Coordinates (Easting, Northing, Zone, Datum):

PLSS Description (County Township Range Section/s):

Project Location map(s): Please submit maps as attachments to this document. Do not submit maps without titles or descriptive references.

County name/s: List all counties where project will occur.

Size of Project Area:

Total acres within project boundary, or directly affected by project:

Total acres indirectly affected by project (explain):

Surface Land Ownership:

(check all that apply) Federal _____ State _____ Private _____

If project will affect a mosaic of land ownerships (e.g., mix of federal, state and/or private lands), provide a breakdown for each specific owner type by acres and percent of total project area.

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Directly Affected				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Indirectly Affected				
Acres				
Percent of Total				

Project Description: (check all that apply):

____ Reduction of Conifer Encroachment

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				

____ Reduction of Invasive Weeds

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				

____ Maintenance/Restoration/ Improvement of Sagebrush Health or Quality

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				

Percent of Total				
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____ Purchase/Acquisition of Lease or Conservation Easement

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				

____ Incentives to Reduce Conversion of Grazing Land to Cropland

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				

____ Restoration of Cropland to Grazing Lands

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Acres				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Acres				

Percent of Total				
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____ Demarcation of Fences

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Miles				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Miles				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Miles				
Percent of Total				

____ Reduction of Unnatural Perching Platforms for Raptors

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				

____ Reduction of Unnatural Safe Havens for Predators

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				

General Habitat				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				

_____ Other: Briefly Explain.

	Federal	State	Private	Total
Core Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				
General Habitat				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				
Connectivity Area				
Number of Structures				
Percent of Total				

_____ Modification of Fire Management to Conserve Sage Grouse Habitat or Populations (Briefly explain)

_____ Sage grouse habitat enhancement that provides project developers the ability to use improved habitat for compensatory mitigation under MCA § 76-22-111. (Attach Explanation of how project meets statutory requirements.)

_____ Sage grouse habitat enhancement that provides project developers the ability to use improved habitat for compensatory mitigation under MCA § 76-22-111. (Attach Explanation of how project meets statutory requirements.)

Vegetation Management: If the project involves any vegetation management, manipulation, or treatment (i.e. conifer reduction, grazing land management, sagebrush management or restoration wildfire management) complete the following. (Check All That Apply)

Mechanical Treatment _____ Chemical Treatment _____ Prescribed Fire _____
Restoration _____ Reseeding/Planting _____ Deferred Grazing _____
Invasive/Noxious Plant Removal _____ Other(s) (explain) _____

Identify the post-treatment management strategies to be implemented (e.g. livestock grazing plans, weed control, infrastructure maintenance, etc.). (500 word narrative or less. Attach additional information if necessary.)

Local Impacts: Describe any impacts to the local communities, including socioeconomic impacts. (200 word narrative or less. Attach additional information if necessary.)

Other benefits: List and describe any other benefits that will be achieved from the project. (E.g. educational, economic, research, public access, other environmental or conservation services, etc.)

Expected duration of effects from proposed project: Check the appropriate box. _____ 1-10 years; _____ 10-20 years; _____ 20-30 years; _____ 30-50 years; _____ in perpetuity.

If the expected duration is in perpetuity, please explain how the applicant will legally and physically insure perpetual protection of the proposed project and its effects.

Total Montana Greater Sage Grouse Stewardship Fund Account ("MGSGSFA") Grant Funding Request:

Cash \$ _____

Percentage of Total Project Cost _____ %

Narrative Details For Matching Funds: list all sources of matching funds or in-kind contributions, the amount, whether such funds are in-hand or committed, and any limitations on the use of such funds.

Source or Match	Amount	In-kind Cash?	or	In-hand Committed?	or	Any Limitations?

For in-kind contributions, explain basis and method for valuation:

For cash match that is committed but not yet in-hand, explain the circumstances of the commitment, the date committed, and if cash, when the cash will become available:

Project Costs / Budget (Non-Lease / Conservation Easement Projects)

Item	Matching Cash Contribution	Matching In-Kind Contribution	Requested MSGSFA Contribution	Total Contributions
Project Planning and Design				
Contractor Costs				
Permitting				
Other				
Project Implementation				
Contractor Costs				
Supplies/Materials				
Equipment				
Salaries/Labor				
Other				
Project Monitoring				
Operation and Maintenance				
Total Cost Estimate				

Project Costs / Budget (Lease / Conservation Easement Projects)

Item		Matching Cash Contribution	Matching In-Kind Contribution	Requested MGSFSFA Contribution	Total Contributions
a. Project Planning and Design					
Engineering	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Baseline Inventory	Applicant				
	Contractor				
Mineral Report	Applicant				
	Contractor				
Appraisal					
Title Commitment					
Other Expenses					
Total					
b. Project Implementation					
Manpower	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Equipment	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Materials (rock, chemicals, etc.)	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Total Easement Value					
Other					
Total					
c. Project Operation/Maintenance					
Manpower	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Equipment	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				
Materials (rock, chemicals, etc.)	Applicant				
	Contractor				
	Landowner				

Other				
Total				
d. GRAND TOTAL				

Project Readiness / Implementation Schedule: List time line including month and year when project is expected to be initiated and completed.

Month/Year overall project begins:

Month/Year overall project ends:

Month/Year of MGSGSFA Grant funding begins:

Month/Year MGSGSFA Grant funding ends:

Likelihood of Implementation: Have all necessary permits/approvals been obtained? Projects judged unlikely to be implemented will be given lower priority.

PERMIT OR AUTHORIZATION	REQUIRED		SUBMITTED		APPROVED	
	Yes	No	Yes, Date	No, date expected	Yes, Date	No, date expected
Cultural Resource Inventory						
COE Section 404 Permit						
Cooperative Agreement(s)						
*NEPA Analysis						
Pesticide Application Permit						
Private Landowner Agreement(s)						
Sensitive Species Clearance						
Surface/Ground Water Permits						
T/E Species Clearance						
Others (explain)						

***If NEPA is Required:** What is the type of NEPA analysis required: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); Environmental Assessment (EA); Categorical Exclusion (CE); Biological Assessment/biological Evaluation (BA/BE); etc.? What federal agency will conduct the analysis and who is the primary agency contact? What is the estimated submittal and approval dates?

Project Timeline and Estimated Completion Date. (Explain) (200 words or less)

Project Monitoring Plan: All projects require monitoring to determine effectiveness relative to the statutory purposes of the Act to conserve sage grouse habitat and populations. Identify what monitoring program and protocols are in place or will be put in place to assess and quantify the results achieved by the project. Identify those responsible for monitoring. Include both short term and long term monitoring. A Project Close-out Report will be required for each project upon completion, to allow tracking of expenditures and attainment of results. Photos, summaries, etc. may be required. (Approximately 2 page of Narrative or less. Attach additional documentation if needed.)

Attachments and Supporting Documentation. (Check All That Apply. Not required for initial project review; however, all information submitted will be considered in the pre-application process.):

- ☐ Project Design / Maps
- ☐ Letters of Support
- ☐ Management Plan
- ☐ Monitoring Plan
- ☐ *MGSGSFA Lease / Conservation Easement Acknowledgement*
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ MOUs and other Agreements
- ☐ Other (list): _____

Additional Information for Consideration. (Not required for initial project review; however, all information submitted will be considered. No more than 1 page.)

Acknowledgement

Initial each verification or acknowledgment and sign.

- _____ All Applicants verify that they have read the Evaluation and Eligibility Criteria Guidance Document before filling out this application.
- _____ All Applicants verify that they have read Executive Order 12-2015, dated September 8, 2015, which outlines the duties of the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team and the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.
- _____ All Applicants acknowledge that grant recipients are required to enter into a grant agreement with MSGOT and the Program, and that an applicant is not a grant recipient until a grant agreement has been executed by all necessary parties. Such grant agreements will include necessary terms and conditions to insure that grant funds are disbursed and utilized consistent with the purpose and language of the Act.
- _____ All Applicants acknowledge that MSGOT will prioritize grant awards to projects which maximize the number of credits generated per dollars of funds awarded, and which provide assurances that credits generated by the project are available for compensatory mitigation. Such assurances may be included in the grant agreement.
- _____ All Applicants acknowledge that applications to the Grant Program do not constitute a consultation with MSGOT or the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program concerning a new activity or land use governed by the stipulations of *Executive Order 12-2015*, dated September 8, 2015, and any proposed land use or activity described in the grant application which triggers review under *Executive Order 12-2015* must still be reviewed by the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program pursuant to its procedures or process.
- _____ (If this Application seeks grant funding for a conservation easement or lease) All Applicants verify that all parties to the lease or conservation deed have executed and attached the *MGSGSFA Lease / Conservation Easement Acknowledgement*.

Signature:

Printed Name:

Title:

Date:

MSGGSFA Lease / Conservation Easement Acknowledgement

All parties to the proposed lease or conservation easement must sign the following acknowledgement. This includes every owner to the real property, every lessee and lessor, and every land trust or holder of the conservation easement. (Attach pages as necessary)

The signatories hereby verify that they are authorized to sign this acknowledgement in their declared capacity.

The signatories further acknowledge that any lease or conservation easement selected to receive grant funds pursuant to Montana Greater Sage-Grouse Stewardship Act will receive no grant funding unless and until every party involved in the applicable lease or conservation easement agrees through the grant agreement to establish the State of Montana as a third-party beneficiary to the lease or easement with a contingent right to enforce the terms of the lease or easement if the grantee fails to do so.

The signatories further acknowledge that all parties to the lease or conservation easement will be required to enter into an agreement with the state providing that the lease or easement may not be transferred for value, sold, or extinguished without consent of the State of Montana or its agents.

The signatories further acknowledge that all parties to the lease or conservation easement will be required to enter into an agreement recognizing the State of Montana or its agent's right to take legal action to enforce the terms of the lease or easement or to recover from the proceeds of the transfer for value, sale, or extinguishment the state's pro rata share of the proceeds based on the funds the state provided pursuant to this part for the creation of the lease or easement.

The signatories further acknowledge that MSGOT will retroactively calculate and make available credits for leases and conservation easements purchased with grant funds prior to MSGOT's adoption of the Habitat Quantification Tool.

The signatories further acknowledge that they will provide necessary documentation or agreements associated with the creation, maintenance, or stewardship of the lease or conservation easement and otherwise allow the State of Montana or its agents to protect its interests as third-party beneficiaries to the lease or conservation easement.

Signature: _____
Printed Name: _____

Title: _____
Role in Transaction
(owner, land trust, etc.): _____

Date: _____